

The Recorder.

BOSTON, FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 1849.

THE GOVERNOR'S TEXT.

The Proclamation for a Fast, issued by his Excellency, with the advice and consent of his Council, commences abruptly with the startling question of the prophet: "Will a man rob God?" This remarkable State document answers the question from the same inspired record whence it was taken: "Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." "This," says our beloved chief magistrate, "is an instructive lesson, in which we read the influence of a nation's sins upon its destiny." The Proclamation alludes, in general terms, to the sins which expose this nation to the divine execration. There is nothing taught in the Old Testament more clearly than the plausibility of God, and readiness to forgive the sin of his people, (call it organic, collective, public, or what you will,) upon their repentance and reformation. If the New Testament does not present similar historic testimonies, it is because there was not, while it was written, a body politic, to whom such declarations could apply. There were, as yet, no "christian commonwealths." The same principle, however, is recognized in the threatened destruction of Jerusalem and the mystical Babylon, in consequence of popular crimes.

The efficacy of prayer and intercession is not confined to the fervent petitioner. He may set in motion streams of mercy, which shall not only refresh his own spirit, but whose overflowing shall abundantly water others. Much more may be done for others, deriving from the same source. A whole nation are like mountain ranges, which gather the dark clouds of divine vengeance is readiness to burst in floods of wrath upon the land. These clouds are often dispelled by the breath of prayer, rising like some heavenly gale from thousands of earnest spirits. Or if a portion at least, of the boding clouds is left to pour out its waters, they break in mercy, rather than in judgment. In such cases, where united supplications have averted the direful displeasure, whether threatening war, plague, famine, or other public calamity, God should not be left to stand by. He has usually gone on to remove the causes, as well as to recall the effects, of his just indignation. He has proceeded to pour out his Spirit, and to renew his great glorious work of popular reformation. He has borne witness to his own truth, and has plead his own cause, till great multitudes have been convicted in their consciences, and have repented and returned to the Lord.

The Jewish nation, in the prophet's time, had "robbed God" by withholding that part of the national wealth which was the portion of the Lord; and by the very constitution of their government, was the proper royal revenue as King in Zion. But he had plundered the Lord's treasury, by keeping back that annual tribute which acknowledged him as their Ruler, and as the Giver of all their blessings. He says: "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Having thus denounced his indignation upon them, he then goes on to summon them once more to resort to the only possible means of escaping from their impending doom for their wholesale robbery, and national avarice. "Bring ye all the tithes, unto the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, with the Lord of hosts; if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

On that all the people of this Commonwealth, assembling, according to ancient and proven usage at the Governor's audience, may take their seats to fast, or penitential confession! And may they, at the same time, bring forth fruits on meet for repentance, that God will be entreated of them, and open the windows of heaven, and give them "the great rain of his strength," till the floods of his mercy shall cleanse, enrich, and renew the whole land.

FAST DAY.

A few years since, one of the professed ministers of this city made a motion to the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts, "to request the Governor not to appoint a Fast." The reason that he gave for this singular motion was, that the day was greatly desecrated, in our large cities especially, multitudes of young men and not a few in middle life make a day of recreation and sport. On the day, the theaters and drinking houses do a first rate business. This is indeed an awful perversion of the day, and of a thing to be greatly lamented; but the Governor of the Commonwealth is not responsible for this perversion. He recommends that it be religiously observed, in the manner in which holy men of old kept such seasons, in times of private, or public distress.

Some private and public acts are to be searched out, confounded, and forsaken. The spirit to be exercised on these occasions, can be learned from Daniel's prayer in the ninth chapter of his prophecy. He frankly confessed, and deeply lamented his personal transgression, and the national sins.

This is now the appropriate work of the State fast. The day call for great searching of heart, deep contrition and self-abasement. If this work is thoroughly done by all the people of God in this Commonwealth, He may, for their sake spare this guilty land, notwithstanding the perverseness of the day. He may regard intercessions for transgressions; He may even hear prayers for those who devote the day to dissipation and amusement. He has heard intercession for such, and He may hear them again. Let this class of persons especially be remembered at the throne of grace on the day devoted to fasting, humiliation and prayer.

For the Boston Recorder.

WHITE LYING.

Under this head, Mrs. Ousey has very aptly and effectively exposed almost all kinds of falsehood, whose motto professedly is to do good. It is sometimes since I read her book, but I remember correctly, however, she has omitted one very important item.

I refer here to falsehoods, (as I regard them) which are told for certain religious purposes; such as the expression of opinion in regard to settling a minister, giving the reasons for his dismission, &c., &c. I do refer to those cases where the truth is openly concealed, but rather to those where on express purpose, made, and intended to be made which is untrue.

Thus I have known a church and congregation, after long difficulty, at length coincide to settle a minister. Not that every man was satisfied; but it was believed that the feeling was as unanimous in his favor, as could be expected. All this was well. Had they come to this decision by a vote of 200 to 25 or 30—this being as large a vote, as could well have been expected—and had this vote been thus recorded, no falsehood had been perpetrated.

But another course was taken. Before the final question was put, it was proposed that, for the sake of appearing to act unanimously, all who could not concur in the affirmative, should absent themselves. The proposal was acceded to, and the call of Mr. —— to settle among them as their pastor and preacher went forth as unanimous!

Now if this farce was not acted over—with slight modifications—very often, I would not complain. But the thing is becoming quite common. Ministers are frequently dismissed on account of ill health, as it is stated. But are long the minister settled again, or engaged in some other laborious employment as likely to bear hard upon his nervous energies as the former; and thus, too, before he has had time to recruit himself, and thus too, he is a language which he understood, not till Peter preached to him, in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, not before the truth under these powerful operations of the Holy Spirit was brought before their minds, not till these two great agencies were united, were they "pricked in their hearts," and led to cry out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

It is, in every case of a genuine revival of religion in a community; in every instance of a sense of "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," in every place, where sinners are seen "thanking unto Jesus, as done to their windows." The two great agencies of sanctification always meet, where that result is produced. The gospel is preached, in its power and simplicity, at least the truth is by some instrumentality exhibited; and the world know it; and strange to tell—strange to all! the world is often told in the full expectation that the world will know it!

If these lies were told nowhere but among politicians, Moses, Editor, I would not have said a word; although the politician even ought not to be a liar. But the evil is, they are told by professing Christians. It is too late, to say tell it in Gath; it is already widely proclaimed. Shall there be a reformation, or shall we go on in our sin?

W. A. A.

For the Boston Recorder.

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

MISSION IN THE SALVATION OF MEN; ESPECIALLY IN SEASONS OF REVIVAL.

Much is said in the Scriptures, concerning the Holy Spirit; or as the original term is often translated, according to Basae's idiom, the Holy Ghost. His attributes, his offices, his operations and influences, his agency in the conversion, sanctification, and complete redemption of man. —— we read the records of divine truth, are often brought to view. It must, therefore, be considered, as a subject of great practical importance; and it should be frequently placed before the pulpit and the religious press. It is not my intention, however, in this and two or three succeeding communications, which I may furnish for the Recorder, to treat of the subject at large. But I will simply present to the consideration of the readers of that excellent journal, a few thoughts, in a few distinct remarks, on the agency of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners, and the salvation of men.

FIRST REMARK.

The agency of the Holy Spirit, in all his operations on the human soul, as, and would seem most connected with the exhibition of truth to the human mind. The fact, which is clearly taught and fully illustrated in the Scriptures, grows out of the very nature of man, as an intelligent as well as moral being. Man, possessing intellectual powers, is capable of discerning truth; and, having moral susceptibilities, he is capable of feeling the power and force of truth, when perceived by him, under the inspiring influences of the Holy Spirit. Had he no rational powers, or were no moral traits present to him, when the Spirit operates on his heart, no salutary effect would be produced on him. As man is constituted, a direct action on the heart, however, is the agency, without the concurrent exercise of the understanding, would produce nothing, but unguided and uncontrollable feeling. By such an operation the susceptibilities might be excited, and the emotions roused; but they would be wild and extravagant; and the consequent action uncertain, irregular, irrational. This result of emotion, without reason, is, indeed, sometimes seen in the madness of fanaticism and the follies of religious frenzy. In these cases, the feelings are excited by some indistinct sense of good or evil, suggested to the imagination; perhaps, by the great adversary of man, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; or they may be, and unquestionably often are, awakened by the mere operations of a blind sympathy or a perverse will, without any tie to guide or restrain them.

You may be sure, therefore, when men are excited without the presentation of divine truth to their minds; that the excitement, however produced, is not the result of the operations of the Holy Spirit. It must have proceeded from some other cause, and will never lead to the establishment of holy principle and a permanent course of holy living. But where the mind is easily moved, by the truth of God, the heart may be easily moved, and the soul roused to action, by the presence of this truth on the conscience, and on all the active powers of man.

Now this is the special office, and it constitutes the principal agency, of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of man; whether in reference to the conversion and sanctification of a single individual, or to the frequent and multiplied instances of regeneration and reformation, which sometimes take place in a community; and constitute what is usually denominated a revival of religion.

To illustrate this general remark, I relate these present cases, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: the first case of an individual conviction, without conversion; the second of the conviction and conversion of many individuals, in consequence of the prayers of one and the preaching of another; and the third, of an awakening and revival in a community, where there was much unscriptural prayer, connected with faithful, pungent preaching.

SECOND REMARK.

Reported for the Boston Recorder

THE EXPATRIATED PORTUGUESE.

A meeting was held last Sabbath evening, at the Tremont Temple, in behalf of this interesting colony, now one of the missions of the American Protestant Society. Sermon by Rev. Samuel Day, from Isa. 16: 4; "Let mine outcast dwell with thee." Mob; be thou a court to them from the face of the spoiler."

These exiles are natives of Madeira, whence they were driven by the Romish authorities of that island, (on account of their religious sentiments,) after a series of persecutions and imprisonments, in order to bring them back to the Roman Catholic faith.

Five hundred are now on the island of Trinidad, and one hundred, in the city of New York.

These last had a farewell meeting with

Christians of that city, Wednesday evening, previous to their leaving for Illinois; where the whole colony are going as soon as the means are furnished them by the benevolence of Christians.

Scripture, banishment and wanderings have left them in a deplorable condition, and hence their appeal for aid.

In the course of his remarks on the subject of foreigners coming to this country, the speaker stated that the Chinese government was, in its earlier history, overthrown by the immigration of the Goli Tartars; also that, according to Sir Francis Lieber, a very general immigration took place throughout the countries of Europe in the earlier part of the Christian Era, and as a consequence, the face of society was changed. These facts were adduced to show what consequences to nations had grown out of immigration. Of the danger in our own case, the speaker left each one to judge for himself.

He also stated that the number of foreigners in this city and New York, is nearly equal to one-third of the native inhabitants; that in the primary schools of Boston, 4421 or 4334 per cent. of the children are of foreign parentage; and that, of the whole number of births in this city, during 1848, one-half from the same source, while of the 300,000 added to the population of the United States in 1848, 300,000 were immigrants from foreign lands.

The speaker also showed that immigration had increased the wealth of the country, since 1820, in the amount of \$100,327,258,75, and that Massachusetts has received of this sum \$7,419,342,53, and also that the Irish, during 1847—8, reached

so well do we reach in 1848, to \$200,000 to found and sustain a school for the benefit of the poor in Zanesville. This school is now in successful operation; many are enjoying its benefits, and its influence must be powerful upon the generations that are to come. In addition to this, schools of a very superior order are kept the year round, ample in their accommodations, for all the children in the place. The town owns two large buildings, one for males, the other for females, in which schools are kept that acknowledge no superior.

These schools which are open to all the children in town, are respectively under the charge of a principal, who is responsible for their general management, but who is aided by assistant teachers in the different branches of instruction.

The price of tuition for the wealthy is increased every year, but the poor are admitted at a nominal fee.

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